



2022  
2023

Q'wemtsín Health Society

# ANNUAL REPORT

Promoting resiliency within communities—working together for a healthier future







**Q'wemtsín**  
HEALTH SOCIETY

We are an assembly of Health Care Professionals who believe in providing holistic health services to our three Secwépemc communities:

**Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (TteS), Skeetchestn (SIB),  
and Whispering Pines/Canton Indian Band (WPCIB).**



## mission

Advancing holistic health  
by providing programs,  
services, and education

## vision

Healthy Secwépemc  
individuals, families,  
and communities



## Weykt

### I am proud to present the 2022–23 Q'wemtsin Health Society's (QHS) annual report.

It's been a very busy year in healthcare as everything got back to normal after the pandemic. **FNHA signed another ten year agreement** which solidifies our separation from the federal department of Health. Closer to home the Secwépemc Health Caucus is busy transforming to a legal entity and will be a registered nonprofit society which should be announced in the fall of this year. **We are continuously working at the table with IHA to improve health services and outcomes for our people.** This is an ongoing challenge as the provincial system is on the brink of collapse and does not appear to have the ability to do their part. The major problem is a lack of health care providers throughout the country, and this has affected QHS this year, both our GP and NP moved on.

Fortunately, better days are ahead for QHS. **We have just secured a Nurse Practitioner that will be arriving in September and a second family GP will be joining us as well in the fall.** Currently we have **Dr. Selena Lawrie** with us every Monday and because the time is so limited, she had a full caseload the moment she arrived.

The Medical Office Administrators (MOAs) have been exceptional in their ability to find **virtual resources for our clients** while we do not have primary health care providers on site. We are so grateful to Megan and Vinitta for their ongoing determination in accessing services for our clients during these very challenging times.

Along with the rest of the team that are all so dedicated to this work we do. I watch them work together and hold each other up every day. They are a group of amazing people that really care and do all they can to improve outcomes for our clients, families and communities. **I raise my hands up to each and every one of them with gratitude and respect.**

I pray for good fishing this year and lots of berries. I hope everyone gets out on the land and enjoys the summer with each other. **Being out on the land connecting and feeling loved is the best medicine!!**

Sending everyone a warm hug,

**Colleen Lessmann**  
Health Director







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## Public Health Services

Circle of Life  
& Communicable Disease Program  
Harm Reduction  
Food Sovereignty Program

### Circle of Life & Communicable Disease Program

Our Public Health Services include the delivery of the Circle of Life Program and the Communicable Disease Program. Through our Circle of Life Program, Community Health Nurses provide **pre- and post-support to individuals and families** and ongoing support to families as needed even beyond the immediate postpartum period. The Circle of Life program offers support, with in-person visits to relocated community members as needed.

Our Community Health Nurses provide **routine immunizations** across the lifespan, including COVID-19 and influenza vaccines. This year, as part of the COM program, our team offered **COVID-19 testing services** to community members. Additionally, we collaborated with the CD Unit at Interior Health to support case management and contact tracing within the communities.

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#### TEAM MEMBERS

**Diane Procter** • Community Health Nurse Manager

**Sarah Bennett** • Community Health Nurse

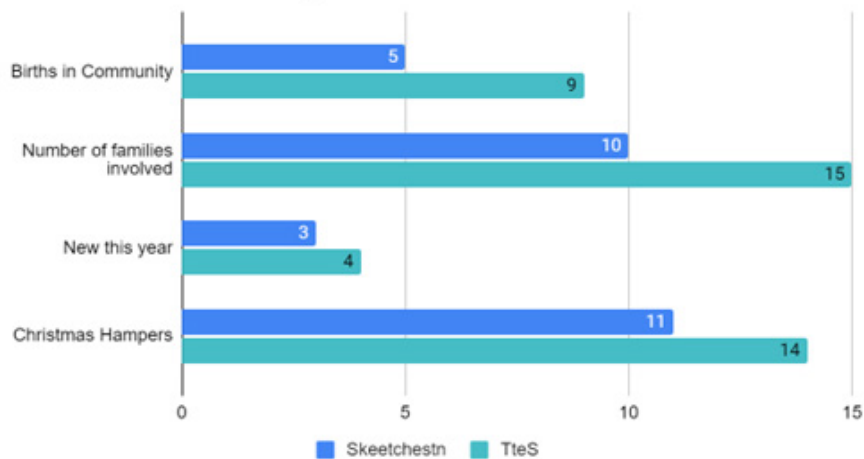


14  
Births in  
Community

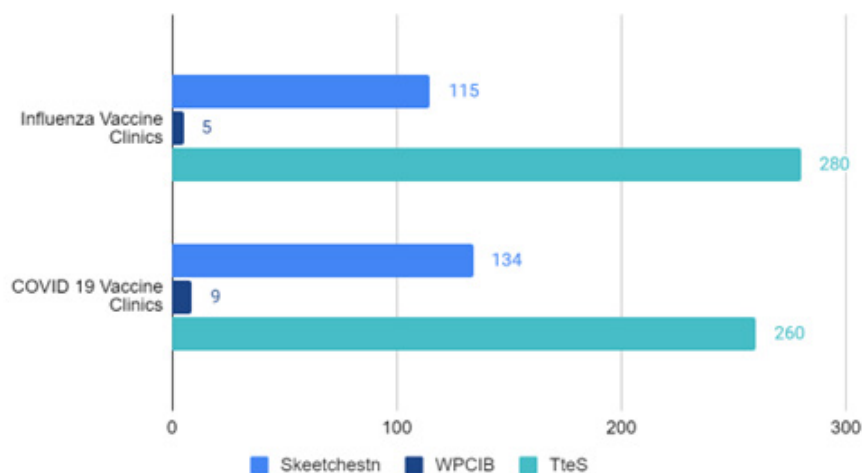
35  
Christmas Hampers  
given to families

The following graphs show the number of participants in the Circle of Life program, and the COVID-19 vaccine and testing statistics:

#### CIRCLE OF LIFE PROGRAM STATISTICS



#### # OF VACCINATIONS



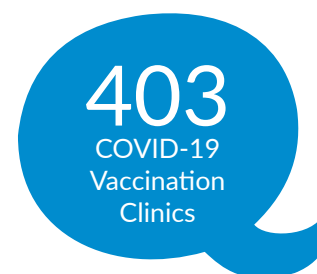


Name of Group Service	Location/Community	Description	How many times event was held in the year	# of Individual Attendees	# of Community Members Involved
Families and Tots	Skeetchestn	Informal around the table group in Skeetchestn. Info sharing and food. Community led.	3	6	18

## Adapting to Challenges in our Community:

This past year has been a challenging time for our community with the pandemic, wildfires, natural disasters, and the opioid crisis. In particular, there seems to be a heightened awareness in the communities around the opioid crisis. We have seen an interest in community members seeking information and taking steps towards counseling and/or treatment. We have also been asked by community schools for support and information on opioid/drug use in youth, as well as the health challenges and consequences that arise with drug and alcohol use.

With all the challenges our communities are experiencing, we have focused on adaptability and prevention in our planning measures. We are noting that as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown and isolation, we may see increased mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD. We may also see more impacts to physical health as it has been reported that alcohol purchase and consumption increased worldwide in response to the COVID-19 lockdown and isolation. Due to the threat of wildfires, floods, and other natural disasters, we are aware that we may have to shift the way we deliver services. In the past, we have found that we often work off-site and out of the community, but are remaining adaptable and flexible and ready to go where we are needed.



## Harm Reduction



The Q'wemtsin Health Society Harm Reduction program aims to provide both **education and resources** for individuals who have been impacted by substance use disorder. The program is delivered to all interested community members in a culturally safe manner with emphasis on creating a judgment free experience for all clients.

### TEAM MEMBERS

**Diane Procter** • Public Health Manager

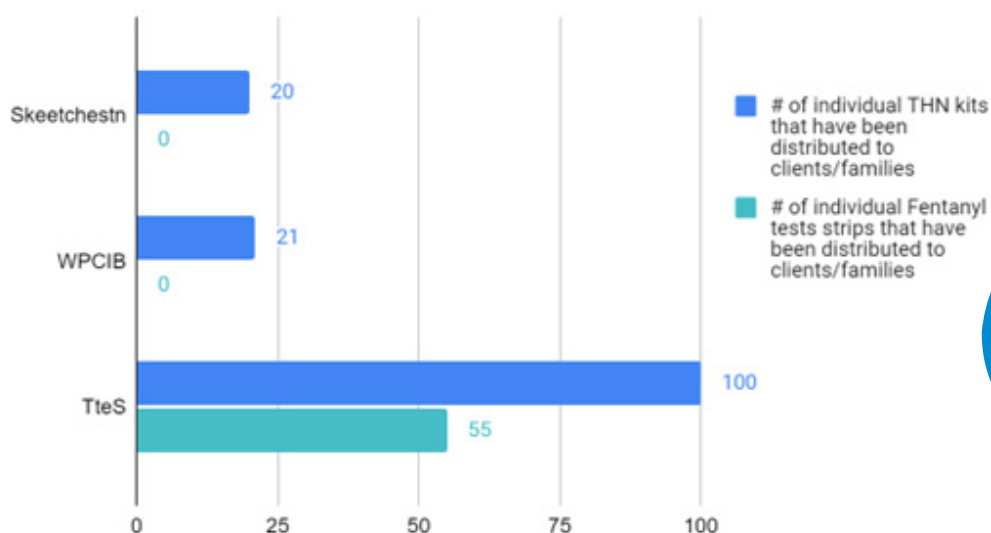
**Bobbi Sasakamoose** • Human Resources Manager

**Tim Clark** • Home Care LPN

### Program & Community Event Statistics

The following graph shares the distribution of THN injectable kits and/or nasal spray in the community, as well as the distribution of Fentanyl test strips in the community:

DISTRIBUTION OF THN AND FENTANYL TEST STRIPS



**141**  
THN Kits  
Distributed





“To raise awareness and fight against this deadly epidemic is needed throughout all the nations.”

Anonymous Community Member



	Skeetchestn	WPCIB	TteS	Total
# of individual THN kits that have been distributed to clients/families	20	21	100	141
# of individual Fentanyl tests strips that have been distributed to clients/families	0	0	55	55

### Our team hosted 4 events this year:

Name of community-based Service	Location/Community	Description	# of Community Members Impacted
Sharps Education	TteS	An educational session for community members to learn about the proper collection and disposal of sharps and similar paraphernalia	1
Naloxone Training	WPCIB	A collaborative workshop with the RCMP drug specialist	15
Overdose Awareness Day	TteS	A gathering held for all individuals impacted by substance use disorder. Focuses on reducing the stigma. Keynote speaker: Rocker Brady, lunch, and local harm reduction resources on site	100
Naloxone Training	SIB	A harm reduction presentation held at Skeetchestn Community School	20

### Adapting to Challenges in our Community:

The opioid crisis has been ongoing for many years, as a result, negatively impacting the entire nation. In recent years, QHS has acted in line with the province's action plan for a reactive approach which placed greater emphasis on the distribution of take-home naloxone kits, fentanyl test strips and other harm reduction supplies. In addition, focusing on the provision of culturally safe education and advocating for the de-stigmatization of substance use disorders.

The Harm Reduction team recognizes that trauma and concurrent substance abuse from our Indigenous population stems from the grief inflicted by colonization and the Indian Residential School System. Our team has been working with local leadership and relevant health authorities to develop a proactive action plan to better respond to the opioid crisis that our community is facing.

The reporting period of 2022–2023 was met with some relief in terms of wildfires, floods, and the pandemic. However, we have continued to witness the circulation of an increasingly toxic drug supply and surplus of overdose related deaths in the nation. In line with the recent deaths in the nation there has been an increase in individuals grieving and seeking support from our Mental Health and Wellness team. QHS has supported the communities in these times of loss and sadness, and it is these deaths that have triggered the need for a more proactive approach to care. QHS is dedicated to partnering with each of the three member communities to develop an action plan that best meets their individual needs. Through this collaboration, we aspire to create opportunities for on the land healing practices with the belief that cultural connection can promote healing and overall wellness.

## Food Sovereignty

The Food Sovereignty team at QHS strives towards **fostering a regenerative and sovereign food system** by working in partnership with community members, chief and council, band staff from Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (TteS), Whispering Pines/Clinton Indian Band (WPCIB) and Skeetchestn Indian Band (SIB). Other partners include: Secwépemc Health Caucus, Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, Community Futures Development Corporation of Central Interior First Nations, First Nations Health Authority, Kamloops Food Policy, Interior Health, City of Kamloops, School District 73, Thompson Rivers University, and Farm to School/Cafeteria. **The overall goal of food sovereignty is facilitated through land-based learning, mentorship, supporting traditional foods, gardening and harvesting practices and developing a food economy.**

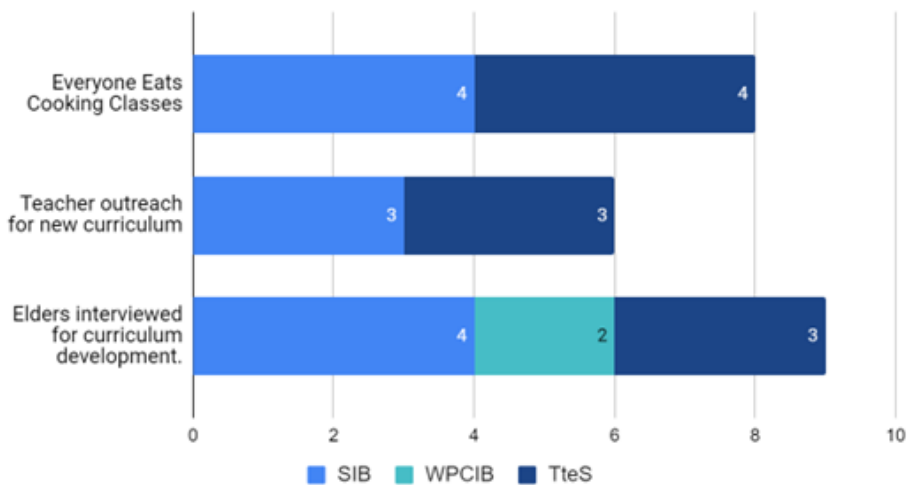
### TEAM MEMBERS

**Laura Kalina, RD, MAEd** • Dietitian and Food Sovereignty Lead

**Jesse Ritcey** • Consultant, Everyone Eats Project

*Laura plays an innovative role in the development, leadership and overall administration of the QHS's Food Sovereignty initiatives in TteS, Skeetchestn and WPCIB. She provides consultation to the bands for project management, funding proposal and partnership development, strategic planning and evaluation.*

### INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY FOOD SOVEREIGNTY SERVICES





Community Based Initiative / Event	Location/ Community	Description	# of Community Members Involved
Nutrition Workshops	SIB	Two workshops promoting healthy eating and video series.	16
TRU and QHS Healing Garden and TteS Berry Walk	QHS and TteS	TRU Wellness visit to the garden and Berry Walk, which features traditional plants/medicine.	25
Minister of Agriculture Visit	TteS	A luncheon visit by Minister Lana Popham which highlighted indigenous food sovereignty initiatives	30
Summer Celebration	Skeetchestn	A feast to celebrate the graduation of summer camp students, featured an Everyone Eats sushi making activity.	30
Food Sovereignty Coordinators Gathering and Luncheon	TteS	Organized a collaborative learning event and presentation to QHS board.	10
Food Sovereignty Support Outreach Meetings	All communities	Community meetings to support indigenous food sovereignty initiatives. 10 total with 3-5 small group brainstorming, advice, and presentations.	15
Food Sovereignty Presentations	TteS and SIB	Presentations to chief and council, program staff.	20
QHS Food Sovereignty Gardening Video Series	All communities	A series of videos related to indigenous food sovereignty, including gardening, food preservation and hunting.	200



## Adapting to Challenges in our Community:

In face of the trauma our communities have experienced, we have witnessed a shift and focus on land-based healing and getting out on the land in response to trauma. Research is showing that land based programming, which includes language, has a more positive impact on wellness. For this reason, our most recent video series and our current curriculum is moving in this direction. Additionally, we've noticed that in response to COVID-19 there's been a renewed interest in improving self sufficiency and an appetite to get involved in activities. Rising food prices may also be playing a role in making our programming more attractive.

The most recent project underway to enhance Indigenous and local food Sovereignty is the Everyone Eats project funded through Heritage Canada. The goal of this project is to decolonize the food system, combat racism, and build community with food. In addition to a series of cross-cultural cooking sessions, a curriculum has been developed based on the teachings of Elders and knowledge keepers from the Tk'emlúps, Skeetchestn, and Whispering Pines communities. By creating these lessons, we hope to teach Indigenous youth about local food and land-based knowledge. According to one of the Elders interviewed, *"We have to keep repeating and repeating the story. Without us following the old ways, the protocols, we're gonna suffer"* (Terry Denault, Elder).

Our Everyone Eats program is aimed at building stronger communities, through promotion of understanding and cooperation, which will mean a greater ability to come together and give mutual aid in the face of disasters. To network and share early development of the curriculum. QHS brought the Indigenous Food Sovereignty teams, for the first time ever, from each of the communities together for a day of sharing.

Supporting the local food systems and traditional ways have improved local resiliency. We've supported planning and grant writing for important climate infrastructure like water harvesting and root cellar at Skeetchestn and a new greenhouse at TteS and Whispering Pines.

A major highlight last summer, was a visit to TteS by Minister of Agriculture, Lana Popham—hosted by Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir and Ttes Community Services—to recognize the great work being done in our community.











### Letter from Participant:

Indigenous Food Sovereignty is a topic that is receiving more and more attention in the past few years, it is a concept that has the potential to create important and lasting progress and change in the lives of our Aboriginal communities. Our communities can become healthier and more resilient through projects aimed at creating and renewing skills, knowledge and opportunities related to gardening and animal husbandry. These projects serve many purposes: they renew the interest and initiative to delve into gardening, they bring people together, build bonds in a diverse array of people, they offer learning and teaching opportunities, and they honor the ancestral ways of being—working in tandem with nature to gain and maintain good health, spirit and relationships.

At Skeetchestn Community School, we have been working toward this goal for about seven years or so, in the form of our community garden and food forest that are here on site at the school. The idea that nutritious food can be grown, harvested, prepared or preserved, and enjoyed by students here at the school has become a reality, and has spread to the wider community in terms of sharing the harvested food and using it in cooking classes which are open to Skeetchestn residents, or having deliveries of fresh produce given out to families, Elders, and others. This is a positive realization of a simple goal, and all of this has been achieved with a few garden beds and a small orchard. Utilizing systems that work with nature, Indigenous medicinal and crop plants, and a holistic, organic approach to gardening, we have put power back in the hands of community members to be a part of the process from start to finish. Gathering and feasting are intrinsic to Indigenous celebrations, the ideas of generosity, respect and gratitude for all that the Earth provides present themselves in the prayers, songs, dances and stories of our Indigenous populations. Gardens invite us to slow down, observe, get our hands in the earth, note our progress, and simply be present in the moment, an invaluable and too often overlooked aspect of our busy lives.





Photo credit/source: <https://www.farmtocafeteriacanada.ca/2022/06/skelep-school-of-excellence-hands-on-experiential-learning/>

This year, we have been fortunate to participate in the Everyone Eats program. This program allowed our students to learn about other cultures through food, to see the similarities among cultures and have discussions related to prejudice and racism as an additional learning experience. Our students were overjoyed to have guests come to our school and share their culture and experiences, and to be able to think of themselves as a distinct, proud sector of a diverse world is integral to their developing sense of self. The QHS video series was done with the involvement of our students, and this is an important legacy that they are now part of. It is powerful for them to see that they may influence others to start or continue their gardening journey.

Historically, many or even most homes in the Skeetchestn Valley had big gardens and fruit trees, but sadly, over the years, much of the knowledge was left behind as the modern world and colonialism began to color the lives of Skeetchestn residents. In the future, perhaps, projects such as the ones that have been completed recently, will restore the interest and offer a chance for our traditional knowledge keepers to share their wisdom with us as we become more and more independent and less reliant on commercially grown crops.

If Indigenous Food Sovereignty is to become a reality for our Aboriginal communities, it will be due to the involvement, cooperation and dedication of a wide variety of people; those who have knowledge to share, those that are inspired to learn, and those that simply desire to be a part of a wondrous and potentially life-changing set of projects.

I am excited to see the continuity of the current systems, the joy and good health it will bring to these beautiful and resilient people. Plant on!!

Maureen Zuts, Skeetchestn Community School Teacher



## Home & Community Care Services

### Home Care

QHS Home and Community Care (HCC) department supports community members with **short term or long-term care**, depending on a person's expressed needs. Our home care services assist members who are aging and need assistance to live independently, managing chronic health issues, recovering from a medical setback, or have special needs or are physically challenged.

**HCC is a client-focused program** and staff work with members to maintain their ideal level of health and wellbeing by:

- Implementing services to individuals and their families to develop and implement a care plan,
- Supporting clients, families, and communities through continual personal, health and environmental changes, and
- Introducing, educating, liaising, and advocating through various community services and Health Practitioners.

#### TEAM MEMBERS

**Deanne** • Home and Community Care Manager  
**Brianna** • Home and Community Care Nurse  
**Christine** • Home and Community Care Nurse  
**Tim** • Home and Community Care Nurse

**Diala** • Certified Diabetic Educator / Dietitian  
**Suzanne** • Foot Care Specialist

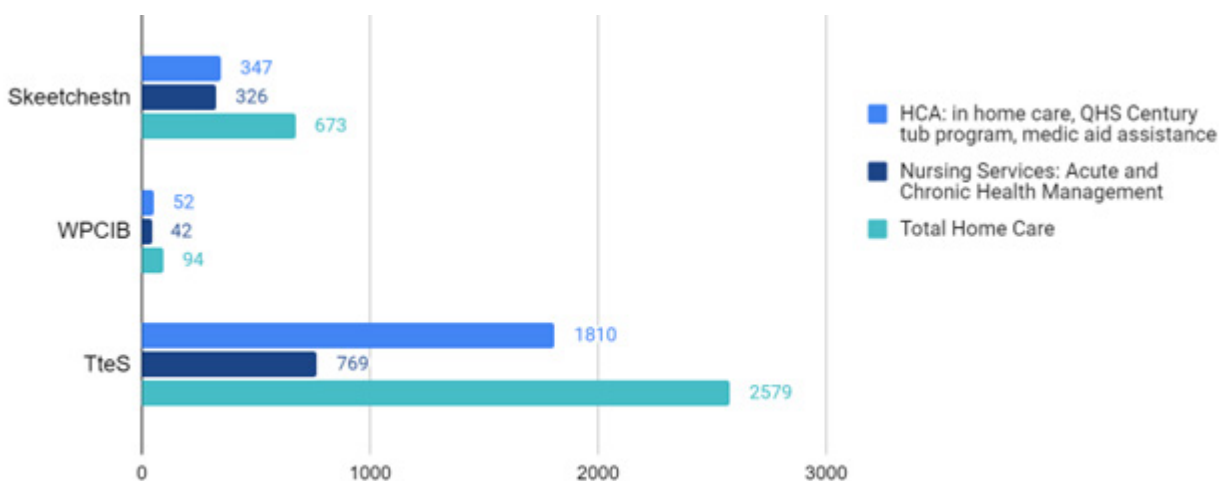
**Kathrin** • Health Care Assistant  
**Tiger** • Health Care Assistant  
**Tanya** • Health Care Assistant  
**Evelyn** • Health Care Assistant  
**Shaunasee** • Health Care Assistant

# 3346

Total Home Care  
Appointments

The following table summarizes the numbers of home and community care appointments in the QHS communities:

## HOME & COMMUNITY CARE APPOINTMENTS



	Skeetchestn	WPCIB	TteS	Total
Health Care Assistants in-home care, QHS century tub program, medic aid assistance	347	52	1810	2209
Nursing Services: Acute and chronic health management	326	42	769	1137
Total Home Care appointments	673	94	2579	3346

## Adapting to Challenges in our Community:

The most significant changes we, in home care, have witnessed is the lack of long-term care capacity for our elderly and clients with such needs. Systemically, this is a crisis of its own—and a very serious one. The need for families to support their loved ones in need is at an all time high. This is leading to burn out and stress on individual caregivers and families. This stress will soon be felt by communities, as our current structures are requiring families to do more than some may be capable of themselves. Our healthcare system is not prepared for the number of individuals that are aging and will need 24-hour long-term care. The lack of staffing in our health systems is also causing barriers to at-home care and leading to burn out for the staffing that is available. As we face this challenge, we recognize the work of our team. Our departments have always done the best we can to provide support wherever the clients may need, especially if displaced from unfortunate disasters.



## Dental Programs

Children's Oral Health Initiative (COHI) Program  
Dental Clinic

### Children's Oral Health Initiative (COHI)

COHI (Children's Oral Health Initiative) is an **early childhood tooth decay prevention program** that is offered to children between the ages of 0–7 years, that are living on or receiving services on reserve. It is also for the parents/caregivers of this age group and expectant mothers as well. The COHI team consists of Crystal Chartrand—Registered Dental Hygienist and Natasha DeNeef—COHI Aide. Crystal and Natasha provide preventive dental care to 6 communities in our region: Tk'emlups, Skeetchestn, Whispering Pines/Canton, Adams Lake, Little Shuswap and Simpcw First Nation. **The COHI team can be found delivering these services at schools, daycares, head start programs, nursery programs, health centers and community events such as health fairs and kindergarten days.** The following is a list of the services that COHI has provided over the last year:

- Annual screenings
- Fluoride varnish applications
- Oral Hygiene Education
- Client support and referrals
- Parent resource kits
- Oral health care supplies (toothbrush, toothpaste and floss)
- Sealant Exams by Dr. David Ciriani
- Sealant application by Crystal Chartrand

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#### TEAM MEMBERS

**Crystal Chartrand** • Registered Dental Hygienist, Dental Programs Manager

**Natasha DeNeef** • COHI Aide



# 25

Valentine's Day  
Party  
Attendees

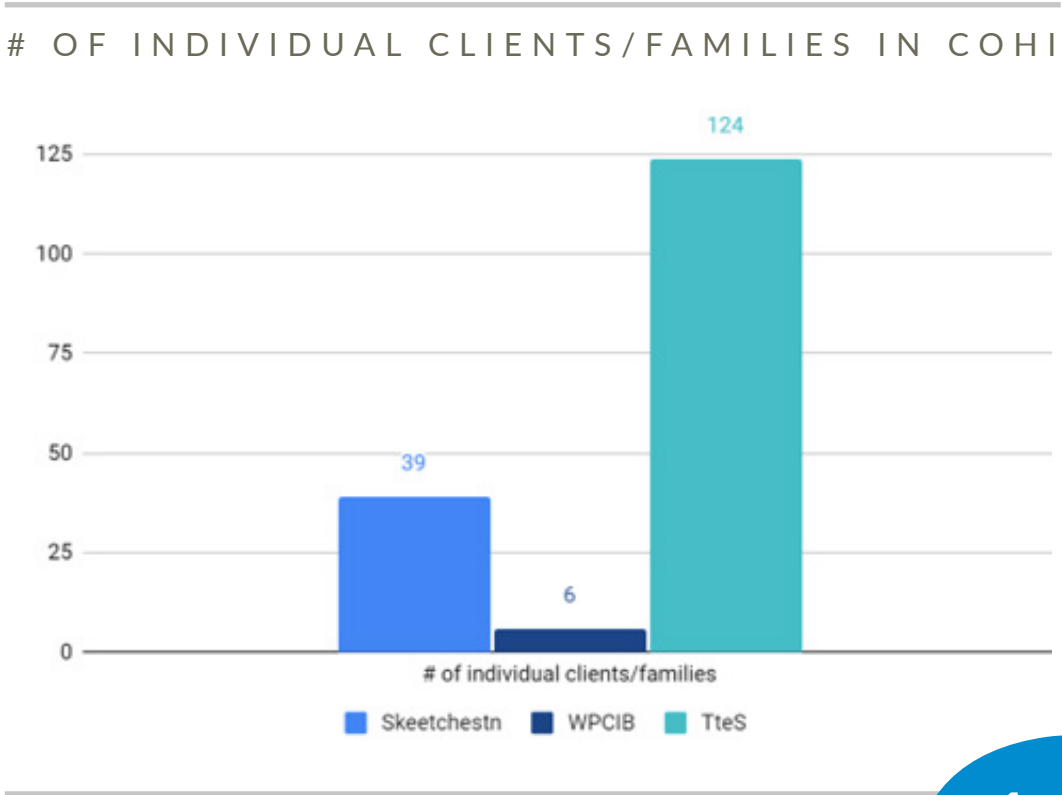
Top Left Skelep Photo: Crystal Chartrand RDH-COHI Provider, August Gottfriedson and Cindy XU (COHI provider from FNHA) at COHI Sealant Day at Skelep School of Excellence

Right TIB K-Day Photo: Dr. David Ciriani and Abigail Fraser

Bottom Left Mya Jules Photo: Dr. David Ciriani, Mya Jules, (mom) Kelsey Jules and grandma (Harla Jules) at Skeetchestn Kindergarten Day



The following table show the number of the clients/families served per community:



169  
Involved  
in COHI



Name of Group Service	Location/ Community	Description	# of Community Members Involved
Preschool/ Kindergarten Wellness Day	Skeetchestn	A fun wellness day with great food, bouncy castle, face paint as well as services like audio screening and dental exams	30
Preschool/ Kindergarten Wellness Day	TteS	A fun wellness day with great food, bouncy castle, face paint as well as services like audio screening and dental exams	30
COHI Annual Valentines Day Party	QHS	A day for COHI families and early childhood daycare providers to come with the kids to have dental screenings, do crafts, read stories, play games, and, have lunch	25

## Adapting to Challenges in our Community:

COHI services and our dental clinic services have remained over the past year. We continue to provide safe, gentle early childhood caries prevention services to our children and their families—no matter what the world is throwing our way. It is so important that we continue to deliver our professional preventative oral health care services with compassion, respect and kindness. One of the goals of the COHI program and the dental clinic is to help to bring awareness to the importance of good oral health, in any situation. By participating in this program children and their families are becoming more used to the idea of regular dental visits and many look forward to our visits. We are often greeted with hugs and stories of how one's day has been. Being able to provide consistent COHI services and dental clinic services through these challenging times remains a constant for the COHI/dental team.

Over the past year, COHI children and our dental clients receive the dental care that they need. In addition to seeing more of their restorative needs being met in either an in-office setting or at a surgical center, we are also seeing a greater awareness of families' understanding of preventative maintenance. More and more families are scheduling appointments on a regular basis. We encourage biannual visits to the dentist and many families are partaking. Dr. David Ciriani worked alongside our team out in the community and after examining all the school-aged children in the COHI program he mentioned that he is seeing less dental decay than in years previous. Dr. Ciriani has been providing our communities with dental exams for over a decade and he is seeing a positive change in the oral health of our COHI children ages 0–7 years.

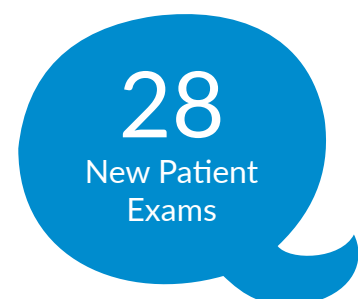
QHS's communities have experienced a lot over the last few years. Whether fires, floods, a world pandemic or the discovery of the 215 unmarked graves just a short distance from here, it has been a lot to endure. Band members from Tk'emlups, Skeetchestn, and Whispering Pines/Clinton have demonstrated resilience and courage in the face of these trying times. Having to go through even one of these events is difficult enough. Their ability to persevere is inspiring. Our team is committed to providing the best oral care we can provide, all while remaining open-hearted. We strive to provide caring professional up-to-date preventative dental services to our clients.

## Dental Clinic

The Q'wemtsín Health Society dental clinic **provides basic dental services** to our on and off reserve band members from Tk'emlups, Skeetchestn, and Whispering Pines/Clinton Indian Bands. Our dentists, Dr. Corbin Sallis and Dr. Kelsie Sallis along with their certified dental assistants Kim Bartlett, and Kelsey Whiting, provide dental services two Wednesdays each month. Sadly, Dr. David Ciriani has retired from practicing, but will continue to work with us in the COHI program. His presence will be missed, and we are grateful to have had him on our team for the last 10 years. Crystal Chartrand, our registered dental hygienist provides dental hygiene service 2–3 Fridays each month. The basic dental procedures that are routinely done at QHS are as follows: **new patient exams, specific or emergency exams, recall exams, oral cancer screenings, digital imaging (x-rays), restorations (amalgam/silver or composite/white fillings), extractions, biopsies, oral sedation, impressions, night guards, complete dentures, partial dentures, denture adjustments, denture repairs, desensitization, scaling, polish and fluoride applications.** The collaboration between Q'wemtsín Health Society's health care team members and the dental staff help to ensure each client is receiving the best holistic individualized care possible.

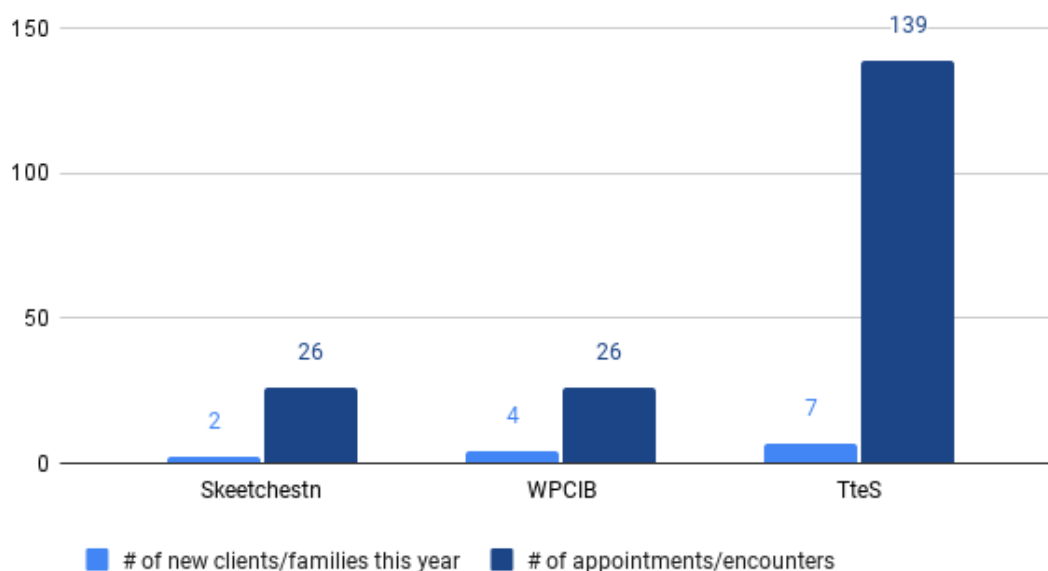
### TEAM MEMBERS

<b>Crystal Chartrand</b>	• Registered Dental Hygienist, Dental Programs Manager
<b>Dr. Corbin Sallis</b>	• Dentist
<b>Dr. Kelsie Sallis</b>	• Dentist
<b>Kim Bartlett</b>	• Certified Dental Assistant
<b>Kelsey Whiting</b>	• Certified Dental Assistant

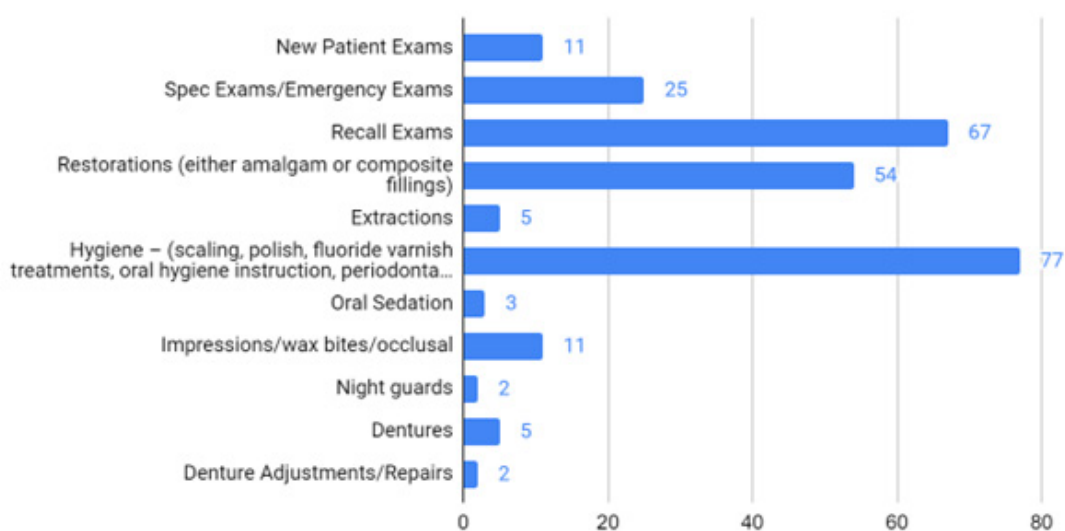




## PROVISION OF DENTAL CLINIC SERVICES



## DENTAL CLINIC STATS



Name of Group Service	Location/Community	Description	# of Community Members Involved
QHS Health Fair	Skeetchestn	A special day for QHS and other health related vendors to showcase what their programs offer, fun activities, giveaways, and lunch	150
QHS Anniversary Open House	TteS	An open house to celebrate QHS's 22nd anniversary, displays, door prizes, handouts, lunch	75
Ladies Day	QHS	A special day for the ladies of out 3 communities to get together, health displays, vendors, health presentation, lunch, giveaways, and prizes	100

150

Attendees at the  
QHS Health Fair



QHS  
**HEALTH &  
WELLNESS  
FAIR**

OCTOBER 13









## Primary Health Care

Craniosacral Therapy  
Naturopathic Medicine  
Mental Wellness  
Nurse Practitioner  
General Practitioner  
Dietitian Services

### Craniosacral Therapy

Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy (BCST) is offered to band members who are in chronic pain, and also elders in the community. BCST is a touch-based therapy that uses gentle contact through clothing to facilitate **deep relaxation, neural regulation, trauma resolution and wellness**. Patients' objectives in accessing this therapy often include pain and trauma reduction, improved function, and improved mobility.



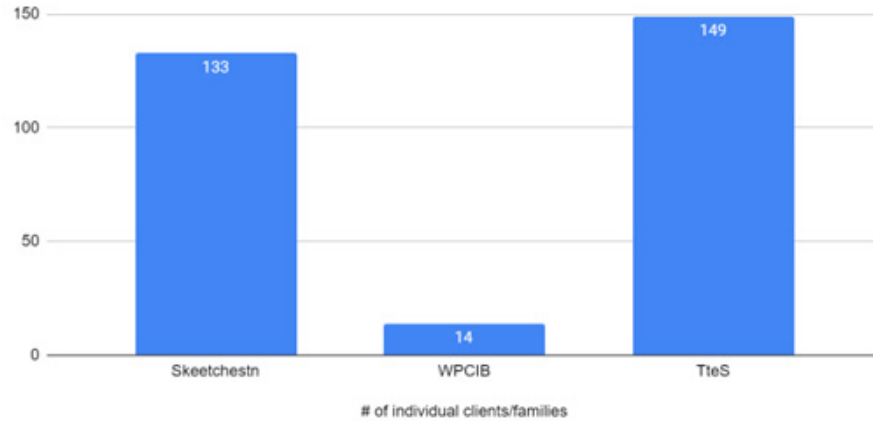
#### TEAM MEMBER

**Sheryl Hamilton, BSc**

- RCST® (registered craniosacral therapist)
- RMT (registered massage therapist)

296  
Cranioscaral  
Appointments

## BIODYNAMIC CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY SERVICE



	Skeetchestn	WPCIB	TteS	Total
<b>Biodynamic craniosacral therapy service: providing relaxation and neural regulation through safe, neutral touch.</b>	133	14	149	296

### Adapting to Challenges in our Community:

Our client population is aging, and with that, we are seeing more complex health issues, or further complication of existing health issues. Additionally, our department is no stranger to the challenges our communities are facing. The opioid crisis enters the treatment room primarily through prescribed opioid pain relief medication. It does occasionally happen that patients who have been prescribed these medications arrive under their influence. It also enters the room in the form of people who have lost family members to overdose. Sometimes people need to express their loss, so it happens more frequently that we are holding space for grief, particularly when there has been the loss of a young person to opioid addiction.

Additionally, SIB members were particularly affected by fire and the threat of flood a few years ago. There was also a threat of flood again in 2023. Occasionally people want to talk about how those experiences have affected them. Talk combined with touch can be a helpful way to integrate stressful experiences such as these in a safe way.

“It was so great to see how people came together for the recent Qwemtsin Health Society Ladies Day. I appreciated the opportunity to offer my services on-site and was very impressed by the amount of work that had gone into preparing for the day. It was also wonderful to see people coming together in this format again for the first time since the pandemic.”

Sheryl Hamilton, RCST®, RMT



## Naturopathic Medicine

Naturopathic medicine is a complementary primary health care service offered at QHS. Dr. Melissa Bradwell has been providing naturopathic services at QHS for 13 years as part of the Primary Health Care team. **Common office treatments include acupuncture, IV vitamin therapy and nutritional counseling.** As in past years, Dr. Bradwell provided care to both long-term and new clients from the three bands serviced. On-site visits were offered at QHS three days/month and at SIB one day/month. On top of regular clinic days, Dr. Bradwell is also usually present at most community events and health fairs.

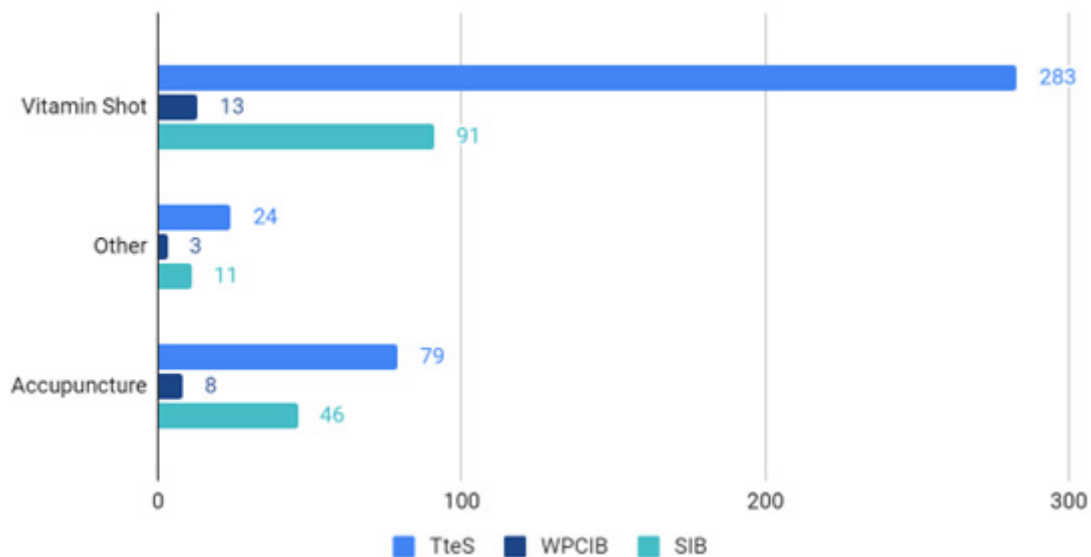
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### TEAM MEMBER

**Dr. Melissa Bradwell, ND** • Naturopathic Physician



## MEDICAL ACCESS NUMBERS



### Adapting to Challenges in our Community:

Dr. Bradwell is happy to be back seeing patients in pre-pandemic style. It's been a tough couple of years with a lot of change, but QHS has remained dedicated to its clients. Getting back out into the community, sharing meals together again, sitting and talking are some of the biggest fundamental pieces to good health. Isolation and loneliness breed a loss of connection, which has a significant impact on health, specifically one's mental health. In connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Bradwell has seen an increase in anxiety, depression, stress and insomnia, especially in young women.

Over the years, Dr. Bradwell has learned so much from her clients and the importance of culture and traditions. In times of crisis or uncertainty it is beautiful to experience the sense of community that comes alive through all the serviced areas. A sense of family is the heart of healthy communities; caring for one another, sharing stories and passing on traditions. It is a blessing and honour for Dr. Bradwell to be part of QHS and welcomed into many of her clients' families. Kukwtsetsemc.

387  
Vitamin Shots

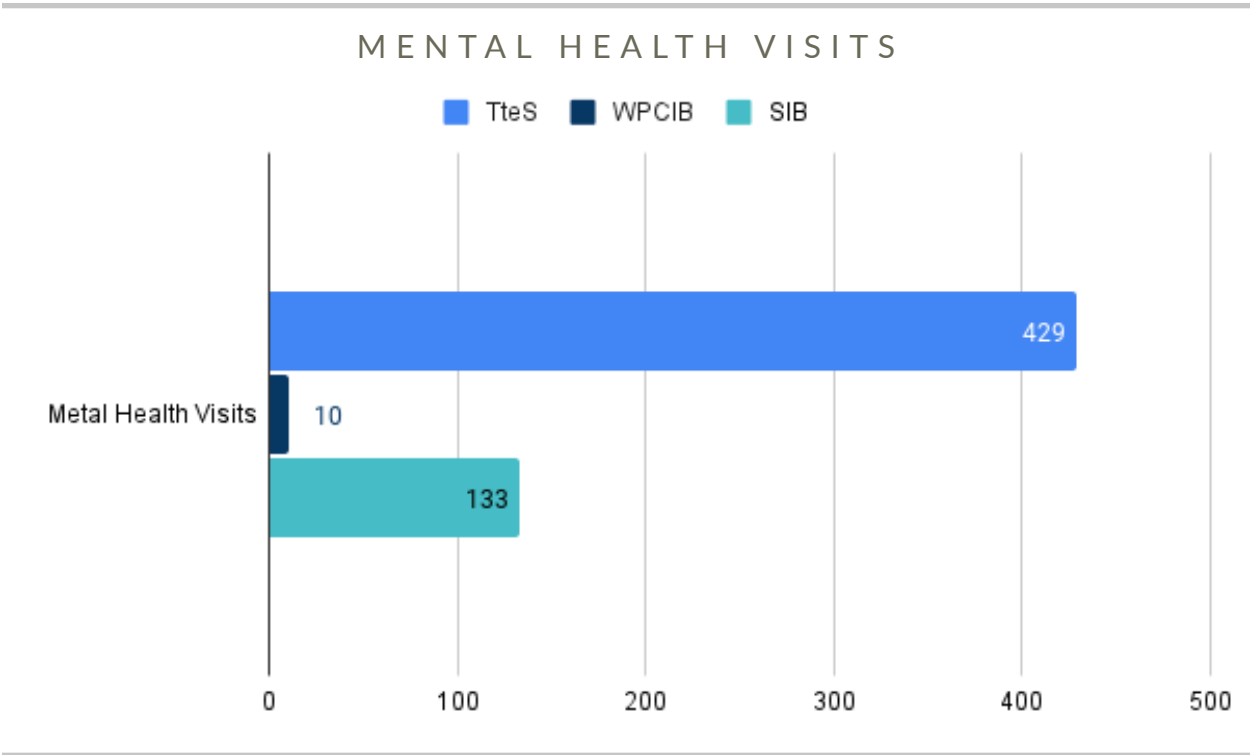


## Mental Wellness

Our Mental Health Clinician works with QHS three days per week providing **counseling** for clients who are experiencing mental health concerns, **assessing** clients, **creating treatment plans** and revising as needed, making preliminary diagnoses, **referring** to other health professionals and facilities, charting, and making a variety of clinical decisions in clients care—such as frequency of sessions, type of sessions, and if client is benefitting from them.

TEAM MEMBER

Tracy • Mental Health Clinician





## NP / GP Services

The NP and Doctor provide our clients with a multitude of health care services ranging from routine treatments to minor procedures. Services are provided at QHS and the Skeetchestn Health Clinic allowing more accessibility for our clients.

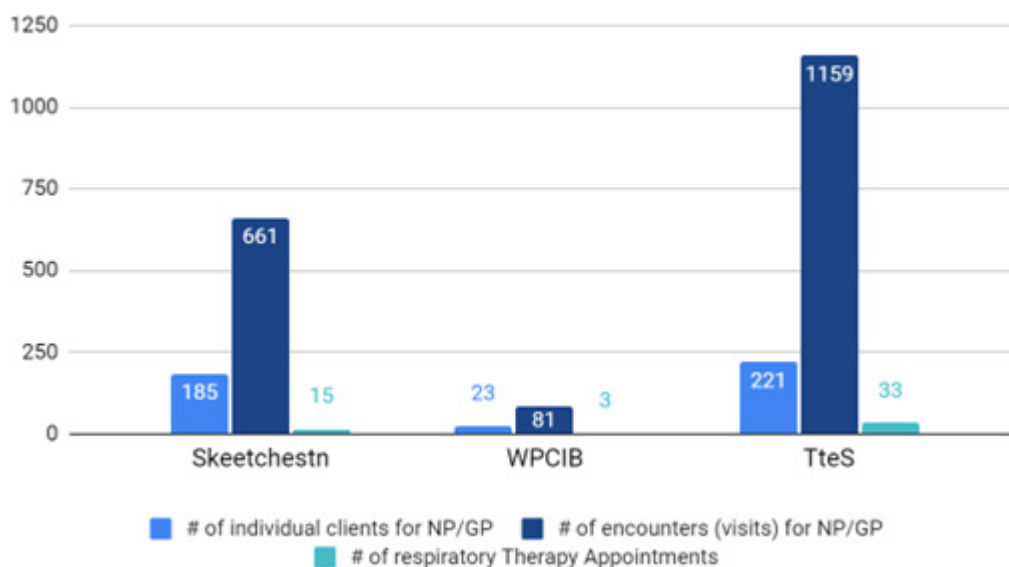
QHS was lucky to have **Dr. Selena Lawrie** join our team as a family practitioner in September 2022. She works every Monday at QHS and every third Monday at the Skeetchestn Health Clinic. Dr. Lawrie also brings a resident Doctor along with her every second Monday.

### TEAM MEMBERS

<b>Dr. Selena Lawrie</b>	• General Practitioner
<b>Dr. Shirley van der Merwe</b>	• General Practitioner
<b>Lisa Creelman</b>	• Nurse Practitioner
<b>Kaden Romain</b>	• Respiratory Therapist
<b>Megan Rosette</b>	• Medical Office Assistant / Office Manager
<b>Vinnita Lamarche</b>	• Medical Office Administrator
<b>Vickie Lyons</b>	• Medical Office Assistant

**51**  
Respiratory  
Therapy  
Appointments

### CLIENTS PER SERVICE / VISITS / APPOINTMENTS



	Skeetchestn	WPCIB	TteS	Total
# of individual clients for NP/GP	185	23	221	429
# of encounters (visits) for NP/GP	661	81	1159	1901
# of Respiratory Therapy Appointments	15	3	33	51

### Adapting to Challenges in our Community:

The services at QHS have evolved immensely over the last year to better respond appropriately to the crises we are experiencing. QHS has collaborated with colleagues and community members to strengthen the support for clients in need. QHS has also focused on supporting community wellness in the wake of natural disasters by promoting educational resources that clients can use to keep them and their families safe.

Since COVID-19 restrictions have lifted, our team has noticed a positive difference in the population's mental health. Now that we are able to gather more as a community in person again, people seem happy and uplifted to have a connection.



“As a member of T’kemplups te Secwépemc, I have grown up in this community and am proud to live and work here. Over the years, in times of uncertainty, I have had the privilege to bear witness to seeing community members come together and support one another in time of need. Something that is incredibly special about the communities in which we serve, is that we are all kwséltkten (family) to one another. We do not hesitate to help someone in need and lead with love and respect for all our relations.”

Vinnita Lamarche

## Dietitian Services

As part of the QHS health care team, The Dietitian Services Program provides **support on healthy eating and nutrition**. A dietitian provides nutrition assessment, counseling, and self-management support to help clients address their health and eating-related concerns, such as those related to:

- Health and wellness
- Healthy weights
- Chronic disease prevention and management including diabetes and cardiovascular disease
- Low iron and anemia
- Gastrointestinal issues /celiac disease
- Food allergies or intolerances
- Pediatric nutrition
- Cooking and traditional foods
- Sports nutrition
- Vegetarian or vegan nutrition
- Osteoporosis or low bone density
- Pregnancy and infant nutrition

Our team supports clients to **improve their health by providing evidence-based nutrition and dietary advice**. Using the latest evidence-based research, our dietitian works with clients to develop individual plans to help meet client's needs as they work towards their goals of health and wellbeing. A dietitian can help clients manage different health conditions, such as heart disease, gastrointestinal diseases, obesity, food intolerances and allergies, malnutrition, kidney disease, liver disease, and/or diabetes.

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### TEAM MEMBER

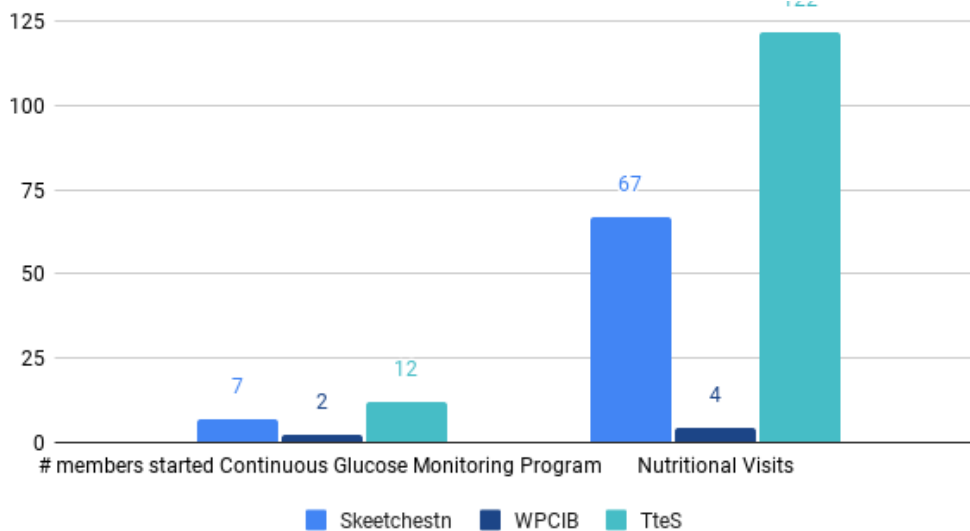
**Diala Toulany, Registered Dietitian** • Certified Diabetes Educator







## CONTINUOUS GLUCOSE MONITORING PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



### Adapting to Challenges in our Community:

With the wildfires and natural disasters affecting our community this year, adjustments were made to accommodate clients by providing virtual visits or Telehealth. Despite the unfortunate events where some clients had to evacuate, they were still able to attend visits virtually or by phone. This adaptation helped alleviate barriers some individuals face to attend appointments. It also allowed more flexibility in booking shorter, more frequent visits as needed, especially during stressful times.

Many community members are experiencing difficulty accessing physician services. This has been challenging for clients as it limits their access to even obtain lab requisitions or prescriptions. Further, the rising food prices we are seeing due to economic challenges and climate change have made it more challenging for individuals and families to afford healthy eating. It is encouraging to see clients and communities continue to respond to these challenges the best they can. Many of our clients have expressed interest and are already taking action in growing their own gardens and/or are benefiting from our Food Sovereignty programs.

# Appendix A



## WHISPERING PINES / CLINTON INDIAN BAND

615 Whispering Pines Drive  
Kamloops, BC  
V2B 8S4

Phone: (250) 579-5772  
Fax: (250) 579-8367

## ANNUAL HEALTH REPORT 2022-2023

### Preface

The Whispering Pines/Clinton Indian Band #4, (WPCIB) (located approx. 35 km north of Kamloops, Westsyde Road, British Columbia) had 50-55 Community Members living on-reserve, these #'s fluctuated due to Covid issues and with students on/off. Community Members include Status, Non-Status and Other members. WPCIB Health Department receives FNHA flow-through funding from Q'wemtsin Health Society (QHS) for the following health programs: Health Services-CHR, NNADAP, Brighter Futures, Mental Health and Solvent Abuse. Other funding is received through Other Resources, Grants and Donations.

### Health Services

Transportation: Elders & Community:

- Transportation and Driver provided as needed for those without their own vehicle.
- Members were encouraged to utilize Virtual Appointments if possible.
- WPCIB transports members when requested for general and specialist appointments, grocery shopping etc.

-QHS Health Services accessed:

- Physician, Nurse Practitioner, Dietician, Diabetic Specialist, Foot Care, Massage Therapy, Dental Care, Naturopath, Respiratory Assessments and Elder Care In-Home Care.

Covid-19 Booster and Flu Vaccination Clinics were held within Community jointly organized by the QHS Team for Community, On and Urban Members.

Community Services: Elders and Community

- split firewood delivered to homes.
- bottled drinking water delivered weekly to Elders, Disabled and Families with children
- stairs and sidewalks cleared of snow for Elders and Disabled.
- all homes have chimneys serviced professionally – Fire Prevention Preparedness
- maintenance of septic systems for cleaning and assessment for safety.
- household garbage removal.
- routine water testing and servicing of the Community Well & Treatment Facility.

Special events:

- Easter, Mother's & Father's Day, Education Achievements, Aboriginal Day, Halloween, Christmas and Birthdays-celebrated with Gatherings and Gifts,
- jointly coordinated with Administration, Education and Social Services Departments.
- A variety of Educational events, training, workshops, Gatherings and activities were provided.

### **NNADAP, Mental Health/Wellness, Solvent Abuse**

The health of community members is an on-going process, utilizing QHS Services/Programs and Staff, accessing further Information, keeping in contact and active with various Health Agencies and other communities, to promote a continuum of Knowledge and Care.

-Mental Health and Wellness and Counselling Services:

- accessed Virtually through QHS, FNHA or Contracted Approved Counsellor Services.
- following the 'Residential School Discoveries' requests for MHW sessions has increased.
- Transportation for health services for in-person appointments was provided as needed

Addictions and Abuse:

- Focus is on "causes and prevention" through providing updated information, virtual and in-person workshops and Professional Services.
- First Nations Policing Services were utilized for monthly Community activities and presentations of Drug & Substance Use Information.

Due to 'small' numbers (easily identified) for sensitive areas of Health Services, the numbers are not allocated 'per' Program area. Community Residency remains relatively stable however the #'s utilizing services in these areas remains has increased from previous years.

### **Brighter Futures / Cultural and Traditional and Food Security Practices**

The Pelltiq't Community Garden was challenged by the 'Heat-Dome' in our area. Workers and produce production were affected by temperatures and availability of water.

- produce harvested was distributed when available to Community and Urban households.
- Continued Consultation and training from Gardening Specialists added their expertise to the project.

The Garden Project from seed to table remains a main component of the overall plan. The Community Kitchen - Education Center provides space for the preparing, preserving and uses of food produced as well as presenting small workshops for training.

The QHS/Thompson Rivers University/Community "Everyone Eats Program" provided assistance and knowledge for Food Sovereignty.

Grants and Other Funding:

- Nation/Community Shared Services Funding through Secwepemc Health Caucus (SHC) provided FNHA Funds for Opioid Awareness and Mental Health & Wellness.



- FNHA provided a Grant for the 'Papal Visit' and Trauma Training.
- Trauma Informed Training was held in Community for Staff Members

#### First Aid Training:

- organized/hosted by Stsmemelt Department for Registrants – On Reserve & Urban.

#### Food Safe Certification:

- Trainer provided by FNHA – presented In Community.

#### Healthy Activities:

Due to limited facilities IN Community, the Health Department assists with requests towards Healthy Activities such as Gym Passes and Outside Events for Children, Youth, and Band/Community Members within Budgets if Funding is available.

#### Food Security:

- Food Boxes delivered to Community as produce was available as well as other items.
- The disasters created by Wildfires and the Heat Dome caused the Fraser River Salmon runs to have limited availability for Salmon fishing from our Fishing Sites.

#### Pelltiq't Pear Lake Fishing Camp Gathering (within our Traditional Territory)

- 1 week camp in August for Members and Community to camp, visit, participate in Fishing and processing as well as Gathering of Traditional Medicines for preserving/processing.
- Fuel Gift Cards provided for Attendees.
- All Meals were provided, Bottled beverages, Fruits and Snacks
- Safety and First Aid provisions with fully Qualified Staff.
- Child minding Services
- Portable washrooms,

Our Community was grateful to be able to access salmon from the net catch through the Shuswap Nation Fisheries program. Community members participated in the netting of the fish at Savona. Salmon were delivered to Community for processing (supplies provided) and pick up or delivery to Community Members, Elders and some Urban/Away Members and Families.

#### Secwepemc Harvesting Camp/Gathering

The Whispering Pines Community was the Host for 2022.Nation Shared Services through the Shuswap sponsored the event and jointly organized with the Whispering Pines Community. Events included the Unity Ride and full activities for processing the meats, salmon and medicinal plants harvested.

### **Elders**

- Elders who have gardens were encouraged and assisted with their Individual gardens, Food Preparation and Preserving. Elders participated in Traditional Wellness by sharing their knowledge and experiences of Gathering of Medicines and prepped for use, Story-telling and other 'On-the-Land' Activities.

**Summary:**

The Goals of QHS and WPCIB for the Community and Members is to assist with providing opportunities for learning, programs and services through a trusting, open and professional environment. The Pandemic Restrictions have had lasting effects, affecting all generations, in every aspect of our lives, especially those of Health and Well Being, both Physical and Mental.

Due to the small 'numbers' of Community members and minimal operational facilities at Whispering Pines, WPCIB members are encouraged to access any or all Services offered through Q'wemtsin Health Society and First Nations Health Authority that may be required.

Working and partnering with the Secwepemc Health Directors and Health Caucus, FNHA, Interior Health and neighboring Secwepemc Communities we strive to promote "Holistic" Health through Information and Education for our Community.

WPCIB Health Director:

Orla LeBourdais



## QHS Board Members



### **Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc**

Councilor Morning-Star Peters  
Councilor Dave Manuel



### **Skeetchestn**

Kukpi7 Darrel Draney  
Councilor Tracy Hewitt



### **Whispering Pines/Clinton Indian Band**

Councilor Mathew Lewis  
Orla LeBourdais, Health Director

On behalf of the Board of Directors we would like to take this opportunity to let all the QHS Staff know that we truly appreciate all their efforts in getting the work done to support our families with their health care needs.





## Public Health Services

[Circle of Life & Communicable Disease Program](#)

[Harm Reduction](#)

[Food Sovereignty](#)

## Home & Community Care Services

[Home Care](#)

## Dental Programs

[Children's Oral Health Initiative \(COHI\) Program](#)

[Dental Clinic](#)

## Primary Health Care

[Craniosacral Therapy](#)

[Naturopathic Medicine](#)

[Mental Wellness](#)

[Nurse Practitioner /  
General Practitioner /  
Respiratory Therapy](#)

[Dietitian Services](#)



**Q'wemtsín**  
HEALTH SOCIETY

Q'wemtsín Health Society • 250.314.6732  
130 Chilcotin Road, Kamloops BC V2H 1G3

[qwemtsin.org](http://qwemtsin.org)